

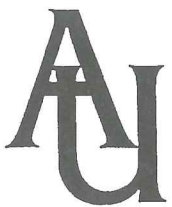
Produced by and for people with autism-spectrum conditions

Asperger *united*

Edition 47 July 2006



E. Rodriguez





Asperger United is a self-help newsletter run by and for people with Asperger syndrome. The newsletter aims to put people with the condition in touch with each other and to share information so that they can lead more independent lives.

Asperger United is free to people in the UK with a diagnosis of Asperger syndrome. We ask for a contribution of £6 per year from overseas readers and £10 from professionals and institutions to cover postage costs.

Editor John Joyce

Additional support The National Autistic Society's Publications Department

Please send all correspondence and subscription requests to:

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Subscribing to *Asperger United*
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Fax: 020 7903 3758
Email: asp.utd@nas.org.uk

All we need is your name and address and we will add you to the mailing list — free of charge to people with a diagnosis!

Thank you to George Cox who kindly produced the illustrations included in the Pen Pal Network section. Thank you to Graeme Lawson for producing the AU logo.

Please note that the views expressed in Asperger United are not necessarily those of the editor, the National Autistic Society or those involved in the publication of the newsletter.

Contributions for the next issue should reach us by 1 September '06

Asperger United was founded in 1993 by Pamela Yates and Patricia Howlin, in association with the Maudsley Hospital, and Mark Bebbington and Judy Lynch of The National Autistic Society.

This was in response to a recognised dearth of services for people with Asperger syndrome and the potential for self help and networking as a means of support for this group.

The provisions for editor's and sub-editor's post was to develop a publication that was truly the voice of the people it was aimed at. This post also provided the possibility of work experience and responsibility and has benefited those who have held the position. These are Richard Exley, David Wright, Martin Coppola, Ian Reynolds and the current editor, John Joyce.

Pamela Yates provided support and advice to the editors until the publication was handed over to the National Autistic Society in 2000.

The name *Asperger United* was chosen by the group of original readers as the most 'appropriate name' for the publication. This was suggested by Anna Cohen.



Dear readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of your paper.

Hope you are all enjoying the summer and that those of you who have yet to do so will enjoy your summer holidays as I hope to with my regular pilgrimage to Lourdes followed by one to Cape Town for the World Congress on Autism. On page 11 is a poem describing my visit to the Barbican to receive an Open University BA degree on which I hope to improve by taking a further course starting next February. There is also a photo of yours truly in academic gown.

Please keep up your usual high standard of

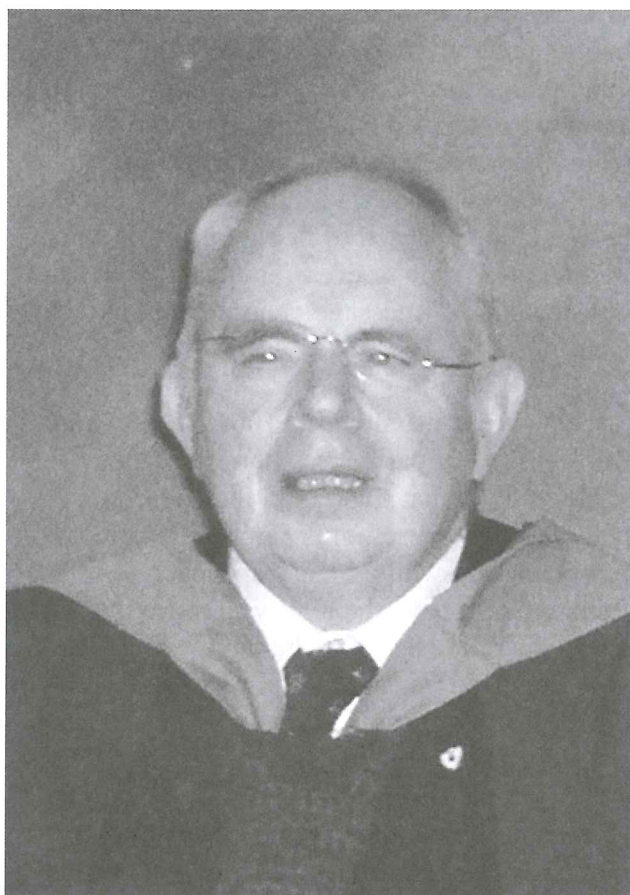
presentation by sending us information about your achievements.

Herewith I take the opportunity to thank publicly the British Parking Association for the generous donation they have made to this paper.

Thanks again for your high-quality presentations. Any budding journalists or authors among you?

Best wishes,
Hasta luego,
Your Editor,

John Joyce



Your editor, photographed at his graduation ceremony

in this edition

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Sex, sexuality and Asperger syndrome

by Neil

Sexuality is one of the most fundamental components of the human psyche, and in people with AS represents perhaps the most noticeable difference between us and those who are neurotypical (NT). It is also the area of greatest risk in which Aspies are most likely to come into contact with the criminal justice system, whether as victims or perpetrators. Despite this, very little has been written on the subject.

At its root, sexuality is all about emotions, feeling and non-verbal communication, all of which Aspies have problems with. Whilst an NT person will identify prospective partners through an exchange of significant looks and body posture — having selected them as a result of body parts such as legs and face — Aspies tend to concentrate on smaller components such as hair, eyes and lips rather than the whole face. We are also far more likely to be attracted to a person's personality rather than their physical appearance.

I think Aspie attraction is to the individual, regardless of their age or gender. A heterosexual NT person is unlikely to be attracted to someone of the same gender, or to someone considerably older or younger than himself. Aspies, who often lack a clearly defined sense of self, tend to be free of the stereotypes and taboos that surround gender diversity. An Aspie explains: "I am attracted first and foremost to the person, their qualities and personality. Their being a man or woman is not important to me." As a result, some individuals with AS consider themselves to be bisexual, homosexual or even ambisexual. Ultimately, self-identity is a function of self-esteem and as we all know, AS causes this to be fragile at best.

At this point, an Aspie is faced with his first dilemma. How do you know if the other person is as attracted to you as you are to her? If she is giving off the usual non-verbal signals

understood by NTs, then she will assume either that you aren't interested in her or alternatively may be confused by the sort of conflicting signals described in Elizabeth's letter in edition 45. What we need are partners who are willing and able to take the lead and state clearly what they do and do not want. However, for many NT women, being required to constantly make the first move can make them feel unwanted and affects their self-worth and confidence; wondering if their Aspie partner really wants them or is simply obliging them by making love in return. Similar feelings are reported by NT men with female AS partners.

Reading what his partner wants from him is difficult in any situation for an Aspie, but in bed, as there is often a lack of verbal communication, it can be even harder for him to know what she wants. An inability to read signs from his partner may lead him to believe she wants sex when she does not: which could lead to him being accused of being pushy, or worse, of attempted rape or even rape itself, if the "no sex, thank you" message is not given loud and clear.

We Aspies usually give 100% loyalty and devotion to our partners — though if a partner should betray that trust, then the consequences can often be severe. This can be attributed to our black-and-white, binary approach to life. I think we also have the ability to move quickly from one relationship to the next, which many NTs may find unusual and which can lead to charges of promiscuity, especially in women.

There can be occasions where AS men will show non-sexual interest in other women that is distressing to NT women. Sometimes, this is because of an obsession with a particular aspect of a woman's anatomy; or it could be because she is in authority, powerful or simply has been kind to him. Where his attention is not

reciprocated and if he persists in displaying his attraction to her, it can become a problem if she sees it as stalking or sexual harassment. This can be especially problematic if the object of attraction is a young girl and his friendliness is misread as perverse and threatening: even though for him his attentions were not sexual and quite harmless, others may automatically assume he is a threat. He may have stood too close to her or given her mixed messages and all this could make a young person feel very intimidated. The risks of this are compounded when one takes into account the propensity for Aspies to prefer to be around people much younger and older than themselves than with their peers.

Aspies are unlikely to be aroused by provocative pictures unless it depicts an existing sexual partner and they can relate images to

specific experiences. This is due to the lack of imagination and weak central coherence inherent in AS.

Aspie women differ from Aspie men as far as sex is concerned, appearing to divide into two separate camps. Some do not appear to want or need sex in their relationships and find the whole concept repugnant, whilst others have a very open and adventurous attitude towards it.

There is a lack of books on how sex and sexuality relate to Aspies. I recommend: **Aspergers in Love** by Maxine Aston (ISBN: 1-84310-115-7), £14.95, and **Asperger's Syndrome and Sexuality** by Isabelle Hénault (ISBN: 1-84310-189-0), £14.99. Both published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers, and used as source material for this article.

Checking out © Tee Randall 2005

Can't sleep at night and always depressed
Abusive childhood memories in my mind are suppressed

Diseased with depression throughout this life
Secret self-harm has been done with a knife

I'm in a world that I can't understand
My autistic head with no wonder plan

Can't take any more I'm feeling so low
I don't like this life I just want to go

It's got to the stage where I'm not scared of death
I feel so calm as I take a deep breath

No fear of death but a feeling of peace
Just want to rest and my mind be at ease

My mind is in despair, I don't care about pain
I know I'll feel nothing as I go under that train

No feeling of fear to jump in them trax
My mind's now blank as I've reached the max

Good poem, Ed
Help is available:

NAS Helpline: 0845 070 4004
www.autism.org.uk

Self-harm help:
NHS Direct: 0845 4647
www.selfharm.org.uk
www.nshn.co.uk

The Samaritans
Helpline: 08457 90 90 90
Text: 07725 90 90 90
E-mail: jo@samaritans.org



letters to the editor

Dear Asperger United,

I am now forty-two and waiting to see a specialist, although I've been told that there are no tests for Asperger's syndrome. I feel like I've been through hell. Having reached this far I want real answers. Doctors, mental health centres, etc, all appear to pass the buck, so to speak.

As usual I've found out more on my own, which is the story of my life. Having suspected that I may have Asperger's for the past seven or eight years, the last couple I've felt certain! All my life I've known I act and feel very different to most people. Until my early thirties I did put it down to being quiet and shy, etc. Probably due to being brought up in the countryside by excellently old-fashioned parents! I love good old-fashioned morals/values.

We moved home when I was about three or four, six and fifteen. Always in small countryside areas until I was fifteen. So I put this down to my problems with people and social situations.

I always wandered off on my own as a kid physically and mentally. And as an adult used escapism, ie. following Everton and visiting the cinema, gigs, etc, nine times out of ten alone! There is much more to it than this but I'd need to write a book.

Because of my being extremely interested in ufology since I was maybe four or five, and having had many sightings and experiences, I really do think ASCs could very well be alien souls in human bodies. Especially as many that I've read about feel like they do about love, harmony and doing what's right, etc.

Extremely sincerely,

David

PS. I'm always amazed by the amount of ironies and contradictions in life. And to make matters even more confusing (for me anyway), people with Asperger's seem to have contradictory problems.

Dear Asperger United,

The NAS has provided your name to me. I have been diagnosed with the combined disabilities of Asperger's syndrome and dyslexia; I am 57 years old; my son is now 16.

I am looking for a solicitor who can act legally for my disabilities, under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* amended 2004, and *Community Care Act*.

I have a report for "reasonable adjustments", which is in place with eleven recommendations, for legal work, as the local authority took my son into care without my consent when he was 15.

I have a residence order and the authority has applied for leave and was granted leave to withdraw from care proceedings with no order made, and still refusing contact with my son.

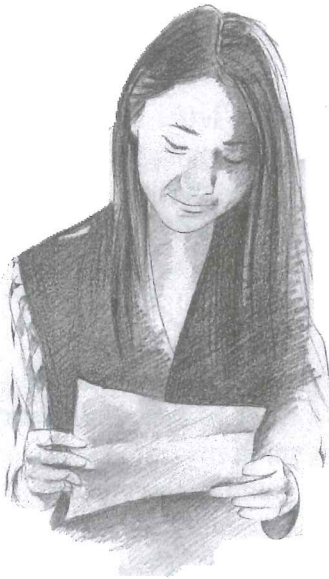
Neither my son nor I have received a Community Care Assessment as a disabled person, which the local authority is required to do. My son has also been diagnosed with AS and dyslexia privately, therefore we have a claim in Education Law.

I have studied law at university but without support granted for my AS and therefore have a claim against them in Education Law.

I also have power of attorney over my father who has Alzheimer's, and have failed to provide an assessment of his disability needs and a claim in Community Care Law.

Can you offer help in any of the areas of law?

Peter



How to reply to Pen Pals

- Please remember to let us know the name of the person who your letter is for.
- To contact a pen pal, please send your letter to *Asperger United*, c/o The National Autistic Society, 393 City Road, London EC1V 1NG.
- We will pass your letter on to the person you wish to contact. However, we cannot guarantee the person will reply as that is entirely their decision.
- Please note that all penpal letters sent via *Asperger United* are opened before being passed on.
- Those under the age of sixteen must have parental permission before placing a pen pal advertisement in *Asperger United*.

****Important notice — please read****

Asperger United is happy to publish pen-pal advertisements but we must stress that we are not a pen-pal or introduction organisation. We do not match people up and we cannot monitor letters (other than the first letter, that is sent via us) so please be cautious when releasing personal details in your letters. The National Autistic Society / *Asperger United* cannot intervene or be held responsible for any ensuing correspondence between letter-writers.

Hello, I'm Simon. I live in SW England near Bristol. I'm 47 and I'd like to make contact with people who've managed to achieve something they're proud of despite the problems and confusions that AS creates. What did you do, how did you get there, did you finish it, what drove you on?

I'm tired of finding problems with AS — there are so many. I'm looking for the positive side now. Is there one?

My name is Keith. I am 19 years old and was diagnosed with Asperger's when I was 15.

I live with my parents in Wolverhampton, and am currently training to be a teaching assistant. I would like to hear from people living locally to Wolverhampton if possible.

My interests are computer games, reading spy novels, and writing thrillers.

My name is Andrew and I am 33 years old. I would be interested in your view regarding classical and pop music. Also what books do you like to read? I like history. I like to go shopping in Birmingham and have a coffee or maybe half a lager. I am very interested in having a pen pal. If I hear from you then I can tell you a lot more about myself.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Hi, my name is James, I live in the East Midlands, I'm in my early forties and I've got all sorts of interests and hobbies like going out to shows, mostly at weekends.

I have my own place and have been on my own on and off since 1999 and my hobbies are collecting CDs and DVDs on all sorts of music (etc).

I found out about my Asperger's when I was thirty years old, then life got a lot more easy to know why I'm different to other people.

I'm also a good letter-writer and have been since the 1970s, plus I make up cassettes — my music taste is all sorts; 1950s to some modern.

I would like a pen pal to write to, from near me so we can get to know each other if possible, and who, like me, wants company. I was misled once by an Asperger's person.

So far got one nice friend in Bournemouth, who I've written to since September 2004.

Looking forward to an answer.

My name is Mark and I am a 24-year-old chemistry graduate. I was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome when I was about 14. My interests are football, the weather, walking and listening to music.

I recently worked for three months at Corex, a company supporting the oil industry. Currently, I'm looking for new employment.

Although I have improved in recent years, I still feel nervous meeting new people and making friends.

I would like to exchange views and ideas with people of similar interests and how they cope with the outside world.

My name is Becky. I am 22 and live in Kent in a care home for people with Asperger's.

Since my only interests are letter writing and lyricism I'd like a pen pal whose main interest is pop songwriting whether it be lyricism, pop songwriting or just writing pop music. The music I like listening to is Mozart, decent pop music from about the 1980s and baby music, ie. Disney. I don't like writing music but to have a friend who liked an aspect of songwriting would be wonderful as I have no friends among the residents in my home as they all like shopping, make up and exercise mostly and I never want to join in anything or do anything they do.

Because Asperger's causes obsession, I used to have a big obsession with letter writing. I used to write twenty a day but now I write about six a week. However, it is one of my main interests and the staff in my home always tell me I write too many. I don't like hounding people with my letters but they take up 98% of my day writing them and as I say, no one in my home shares this interest. I don't want to ask for a pen pal who likes letter writing as most people find writing letters an awful bore and I love it, but I would like a pen pal whose main interest was pop songwriting as that's all I live for other than letter writing.

I am Mark H, aged 38. I travel to Coventry to see an Asperger specialist (she gave me a copy of *Asperger United*). My mum escorts me because I cannot use public transport. I would like a pen pal, like cranes, chimney cowl and pots, steam engines, etc.

*Please be careful to mark letters for Mark H
with "Mark H"
and those for the other Mark,
"Mark, Chemistry", thank you.*

Dear Asperger United,

Having read a letter from Pamela in edition 46 (April 2006), I would reply to her as follows:

I have hyperacusis as well and I greatly sympathise with you because I find it very frustrating that some everyday sounds seem unnaturally loud to me. The sounds I find most annoying are high-pitch shrieks, especially if they are loud like sirens. My hyperacusis started in February 2004 when I was quite stressed at university and they had building work going on. Probably the combination of the two gave me this unpleasant condition. I would rather have Asperger's syndrome instead of having both. This is because although my Asperger's has made my life tough at times, it did not have such a disastrous effect as my hyperacusis.

I go to the audiology department in the ear, nose and throat clinic of my local hospital. My consultant told me to relax, to listen to noises which I like (eg. the sea) and not use ear plugs or muffs because they will make my ears more sensitive because they are trying to hear through the ear plugs. He also said that I should only use ear plugs for sounds which are loud for a person with normal hearing which is about 85+ decibels.

He gave me a relaxation CD and a sound generator which has broad-band noise settings which are Heart Beat, Sea Waves, Brook (sound of water trickling), Birds, Woods (sound of crickets), white noise (sound of radio interference) and the Rain. You could also order a pink-noise CD from the internet. Pink noise is like white noise because it sounds like interference but the higher frequencies are softer than the lower frequencies.

I have read on the internet that aspartame increases your sensitivity to noise. This is found in sweeteners (except Splenda) and in low-calorie drinks and yoghurts. (As you probably know, this is shown in the ingredients lists.) I am not sure if what the internet said is true but

when I stopped taking aspartame products, my hearing decreased in sensitivity.

You could try taking magnesium and vitamin tablets; my consultant said that I should take magnesium and vitamin tablets on alternate days (ie. magnesium today and vitamins tomorrow). He suggested this because I would be overdosing on magnesium otherwise.

It is hard to know how to help with your hatred of criticism because nobody likes being criticized.

I hope this helps.

Yours sincerely,

Alex

This is a request to the Jim who wrote a letter to DS Linney.

He did not include his full name or address with the letter, but asked DS Linney to reply via *Asperger United*.

The Goth has a letter for him. Please would he get in touch with *AU* and provide his address so that the letter can be sent to him.

The National Autistic Society has launched the make school make sense campaign

The campaign is to exert pressure on the Government and local authorities to improve educational provision for children and young people with ASCs. To find out more and add your voice to the campaign please visit

www.autism.org.uk/msms

email **campaign@nas.org.uk** or

telephone **020 7923 5799** (answerphone only).

From despair to fulfilment — my life with undiagnosed Asperger syndrome

by Helen

Thirty years ago, when I entered a psychiatric clinic at the age of eighteen, having just experienced a nervous breakdown, I thought that my life was over. I wonder how different life would have been if the doctors had known then what was confirmed only a few months ago, that I and my older brother have Asperger syndrome. Instead all I knew was that I had experienced a miserable childhood with constant tension in the home, persistent bullying from my brother, an inability to make friends and multiple phobias which had caused me to retreat into a fantasy world. The psychiatrists blamed everything on my parents and on my religious upbringing, causing me to hate my family and hate God.

Little did I realize then that this experience was to be the turning point of my life. My chief phobia was completely cured within a month by cognitive behavioural therapy, which also taught me a valuable lesson, namely that when you run away from a fear it gets bigger but when you stand your ground you can overcome it.

I was also befriended by a fellow patient, a male-to-female transsexual, who, like me, had had a very religious upbringing and had hated God, but had regained her faith and found peace. She was confident that I would do the same. Even in my state of self-pity I could see that she had suffered far more than I had, so her words made a deep impression.

Shortly afterwards I went to university to do my maths degree and was befriended by people from the Christian Union. Despite my hostility and cynicism they offered unconditional friendship and it wasn't long before I became a Christian myself. Since then my faith has helped me in so many ways. In both the Christian Union and later in churches I have been offered unconditional acceptance, despite continuing

social blunders and angry outbursts, yet people have also had the courage to tell me when I have got things wrong. My anxiety levels have also reduced due to learning to trust God.

On leaving university, life again became very difficult, although I was fortunate in getting a job as a trainee actuary and eventually qualified at the age of thirty. The difficulties in relationships with work colleagues, the loneliness of living alone and failure to attract any of the men I liked crushed all the self-esteem I had gained at university and life would have been completely unbearable had it not been for the friendship and support of people at church.

Gradually, through trial and error, I learned some social skills and coped better at work and with living alone, but as I entered my thirties, still without a boyfriend, my dream of having a family of my own seemed further away than ever. Then life took another dramatic turn.

During my time at university I had started doing voluntary work with children with learning difficulties and had been attracted by their innocence and ready acceptance of anyone who took an interest in them. Once my actuarial examinations were behind me I resumed this work and met a single woman who had adopted two children with Down's syndrome. Inspired by her example I enquired about adoption myself.

The first agency turned me down, deciding that it was too great a risk to let someone who had had a breakdown adopt a child, but then I heard that my local county council had a baby boy with Down's syndrome who had been waiting seven months for a home. Immediately I applied to them and six months later I brought my first son, David, home. Despite the

misgivings of many people who knew me,
David and I thrived together and things were
going so well that three years later a second
Down's baby, Michael, joined us and made our
family complete.

Both my sons are now teenagers and I won't
pretend that life as a parent has been easy,
particularly since my younger son was
diagnosed with diabetes seven years ago. I
certainly couldn't have managed without the
support of my mother, my church and the
respite care offered by social services, not to
mention an understanding employer, willing to
offer me part-time work with very flexible
hours. Yet despite all the difficulties, my sons
have transformed my life. As the doctor who
finally diagnosed me with AS said, by some
instinct (or was it divine guidance?), I chose the
very children who were right for me.

Like me, my children say exactly what they
think, so we understand each other. Whereas
other children might show subtle signs of
distress that I might fail to notice, mine express
their needs and hurts so loudly that they cannot
be ignored. Having made so many social gaffes
myself, there is little that my children can do to
embarrass me (although they try very hard) and
I can even enjoy the special qualities that make
them different.

As my social worker pointed out, my
preference for fixed routines actually benefits
children like mine and is particularly helpful in
managing Michael's diabetes. Finally, the
children's enormous capacity for love and
unconditional acceptance has helped to heal
many of the hurts of past rejections.

Looking back, perhaps it is as well that my
AS wasn't diagnosed all those years ago.
Although it would have spared me the guilt of
blaming myself and my parents for my
problems, the knowledge that I had a disability
might have made me give up, instead of trying
so hard to be "normal" and daring to believe
that with God's help, anything is possible.

Barbicanned

On March 31 two thousand and six,
With mother and sister in tow,
One joined the Thameslink at Croydon
Where were we to go?

Off train at Farringdon into a cab
To the Barbican we went;
This the location
Where next four hours were spent.

Once in the building we report to the desk
Where we get the certificate
Thence the gown is obtained
And for food we're not late.

Then to the theatre
For the big show:
Six hundred graduates
But what do you know?

Two special degrees are presented
Who are these joining us?
Two fine new doctors
Chris Noble and Lynne Truss

Now Dame Betty the Chancellor
Meets a real boffin:
At ninety-seven
This new doctor seems far from his coffin!!

I am presented
And greeted "Well done"
At five fifteen
There's an end to the fun.

Back on the tube
to Farringdon Station,
Thence on the train
to Carshalton we go.
To see some delinquents put on a show.

They seem to enjoy upsetting the litter bin
to decorate the street.
But we do not know if they ever
Their destiny did meet.

John Joyce

The eyes have it

by J Watts

A word about binocular rivalry. There are several good websites which explain it in more detail. Basically when you look at something the eyes alternate between which one is looking but when it's not working quite right the movement between eyes is a bit sticky.

This has been known about in relation to mental health issues for about the last fifty years. It's something that doctors obviously haven't thought to mention to people! Maybe there is a similarity to waking dreams — makes some sense in this context. If the eyes aren't working properly then maybe proper REM sleep (rapid-eye-movement sleep, a state of active dreaming) isn't happening.

The really ludicrous thing about this is that most eyesight difficulties like this can be solved

by simple exercises and seeing if there is an underlying learning disability too. Also for something called scotopic sensitivity syndrome: it's reckoned that this is what Virginia Woolf probably had. Try looking at any pictures of her. Her eyes are very deep-set. It looks as if she struggled to actually see. If she had had access to a really good optometrist it could have really helped her.

I'm sure knowledge about this could really alleviate or preclude altogether the need for neuroleptics in many cases. Out of interest, do neuroleptics have the same effect on people's eyes as alcohol? That is, making them move apart from each other? This could be why they work as they do. To focus and concentrate you need to make your eyes come together and converge.

For some people, probably including Woolf, the general shape of their faces means that their eyes are set close together; they have a big nose in the way; eyes are set very deep; the person has a very prominent brow, or they have a very wide face or a face that curves back more sharply than most either side of the nose, so that they are slightly boss-eyed.

All these things would mean that they find it difficult to bring their eyes together to converge and that their visual acuity would be compromised. The eyes would become tired and the brain would overcompensate. The two may not necessarily be linked to each other by the person and could easily be mistaken for stress (or spiritual experiences).

Without knowledge of this it is no wonder that so many people end up needlessly with mental health problems and mistaken diagnoses when for the large part this could be treated by very simple means or prevented altogether.



ON THE DUVET!

The proper use of language — who has the problem?

by Elkie

Some weeks ago I went on a day course held by the education department at the sports centre in Dingwall. When I arrived, I was welcomed by a friendly lady, who pointed to a table with coffee and tea and a selection of biscuits, to help myself to what I liked. After smelling the biscuits, I decided that I liked them all, so I took one of each. Instead of being pleased with my silent praise for her baking, the lady's friendly face went into a frown. Well, maybe it only looked like that to me. After all, I am not very good at interpreting facial expressions.

When I had finished my biscuits and a cup of tea, I ventured into the lecture hall. Other people were standing around chatting, until a tall lady next to an overhead projector, told us to take a seat. I picked up a chair and waited for her next instruction as to where I should put it. However, I was waiting in vain. So I looked around to take a cue from the other course participants and found them all comfortably seated next to one of the tables. Maybe I hadn't heard the rest of the lecturer's instruction above the chatter of the people. I put down my chair and sat on it.

As time went on, I felt the need to go to the toilet. To reach the facilities, I had to go through the lobby with the refreshments. Next I came to a door with a sign saying:

NO GLASSES BEYOND THIS POINT

Wondering about this strange rule, I dutifully took my glasses off and put them on the table, before opening the door. While I was making my way to the ladies, I was pondering the fate of some poor, very short-sighted person trying to feel their way to the toilet without their spectacles on. Sure enough, this was a sports stadium, but could they not make sure that balls were only kicked or thrown in designated areas instead of causing a danger to other people's spectacles? It was only later during a

discussion about this after lunch that I learned the true meaning of the sign at the door. I had had no reason to take my specs off. What it referred to were drinking glasses.

As the afternoon wore on, I became increasingly restless. So when the lecturer said: "I don't want to bore you any longer," I agreed loudly: "Neither do I." After a short moment of stunned silence, people began to chuckle and giggle amongst themselves. I felt confused. Had there been something wrong with my remark? The lady at the front looked slightly embarrassed, and sure enough, she did not bore us for much longer.

On the train journey home, I thought about the things I had learned that day. When we arrived in Inverness, they had put a barrier up at the end of the platform, obviously one of the new security measures. When I came to the guard at the barrier, he asked me if I had a ticket. "Yes," I answered and was about to proceed, when he stepped in my way, saying in a rather unfriendly voice: "Can I have it, please?"

"No," I answered, "I need to keep it to claim my travel expenses back," and I started to explain where I had been that day. However, the guard soon interrupted me in a rather rude way. "Do you realize that you're delaying everybody?" Now this was a vicious accusation. "It is you who is delaying everybody by blocking our way," I replied. Had it not been for a couple of other passengers impatiently climbing over the barrier, this dispute might have gone on and on. Well, in the end another guard came, obviously a superior of the first one, and let us all pass, to prevent a riot.

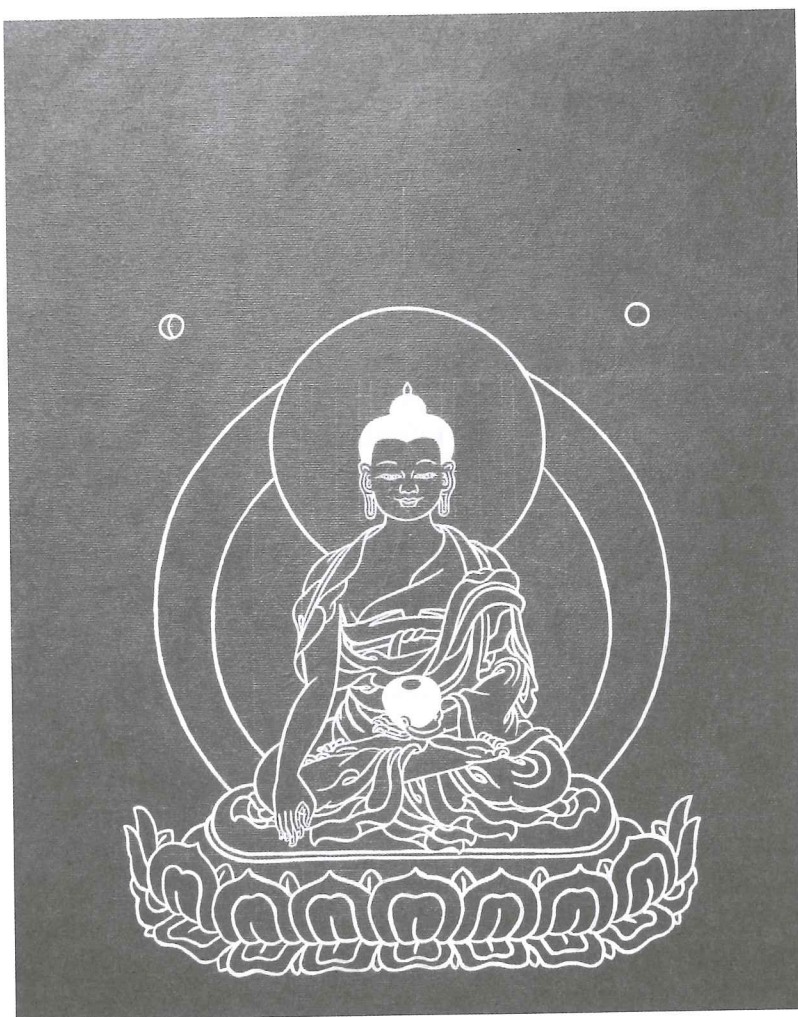
Cycling out to my cottage I thought that on the whole it had been a good day, but why do so many people in our society have a problem with the proper use of language?

Observations on benefits

by Elizabeth

Following the letter from Tom in the last issue of *AU* regarding benefits paid by the welfare state, I wondered if *AU* readers would be interested in my somewhat cynical observations. Readers might recognize some of them.

1. People not on benefits think those who claim them are making false or exaggerated claims, ie. are scroungers.
2. People with obvious or invisible disabilities make every effort to play them down or disguise them entirely.
3. Non-claimants think that people who don't hide their disabilities enough want undeserved sympathy and should try harder.
4. People claiming benefits think that other people on benefits get more than they do.
5. People who do get extra benefits probably have extra problems other people don't know about.
6. People who live on benefits live in constant dread of having them taken away.
7. People not on benefits think that benefits are too easy to get.
8. People who claim benefits often have to fight the system over long periods of time to get and keep them.
9. The higher the level of a claimant's education, the more "disgraceful" their claim seems to be to a non-claimant. ("What! Has a degree and can't keep herself?")
10. Nearly every claimant seems to have at least one heartless relation who is embarrassed by the connection.
11. People not on benefits sometimes boast they have never claimed them and never would — and then seem to get more than anyone else when they do!
12. Claimants should always remember that they have a statutory right to their benefits. If you're not entitled to them you just don't get them. So make your claim with a clear conscience!



Articulating the evolving mind conditions

by **Steven Frisby**, artist of the picture on page 14 (called Sakyamuni) and the cover of issue 46

Autistic awareness is not in the world of ignorance, it is of understanding. Habits are of a different nature and for a different reason. Disabled by being outcast and misunderstood, it's like I know life is very beautiful but in relation to how the world of conditioning functions, I'm in a traumatic position. Operating in the outside, social world is nearly impossible. I have to act how I think I should: it's not me, there is no me.

Knowing is not thought, it is vision. The ways of the world are man-made expectations, and the old systems are no longer serving us for the better. It is now 5:48am; I just woke up in my dark bedroom with a clear description or vision in my head of my position; getting up to write has disturbed it. Now I have to think or wait to feel the pictures again. The answer is blowing in the wind — thanks, Bob!

A quiet but beautiful trauma: personal life in the world never begins, it is only acted out. All the mind “conditions”, ADHD, the autistic spectrum and other misunderstood mind phenomena, are all expressions of human evolution. The assumed ways of being in the world are being transcended; humans are becoming more aware of the workings of the world of spirit. There is a contrast becoming evident between understanding and ignorance. That is, revelation of the fourth and fifth dimensions (the growth of Reiki, meditation and healing) and, the defence and nurturing of ignorance (expanding greed, violence and senseless action).

The man-made systems that herd and control humans are the cause of attention deficit and the autistic “rage”. Man is free. ADHD, the autistic spectrum and other conditions are not disorders, they are evolved mind qualities born into a world that doesn't yet have the understanding to accommodate them. All the

recent conflict and war has been caused by the ignorant, attached to their own salaries, power and dominance, who are fighting their last stand in opposition to the evolution of consciousness and the fall of ignorance.

Science is not the authority in knowing, it doesn't acknowledge what it doesn't understand. It wants to control what we all think. Scientists have been murdered by dark agents for being intuitive (transcending scientific opinion) because true understanding threatens the theories that are imposed upon us as reality. God-consciousness threatens all opinion and theory. Science calls intuitive perception of the truth “new-age nonsense”. When a healer brings energy from the universe that heals, science dismisses it as unprovable new-age nonsense. Science doesn't acknowledge the truth when it is unquantifiable. The real meaning of the word “understanding” blows science out of the water.

Understanding doesn't need a PhD or multi-universe hyper-theories to guess or dictate how things are, things just are. It's just a case of being a witness with an understanding mind that receives the truth and has the wisdom to perceive what just *is*. This is what boggles scientific thought. Understanding and wisdom are God-given gifts when the limitations of ego are transcended and are not of this world. Evolution happens when the mind wakes up and sees that all is made of God-energy and can't be known by measuring it or theorising.

What is real goes way beyond human senses; we don't know the half of it. The world that is sensed is a mere shadow, limited by the ignorant nature of the human condition. Anyone that refutes the realities of consciousness evolution and insight does so out of fear and attachment to the personal world. The truth hurts, but for the higher good.

Computer group for autistic users

We exist to provide support for Unix users of all levels and act as a link between members of local lugs who are either autistic or sympathetic to the social issues of autistic people making it easier to link up with local users as well.

Cheers,

sparkes

||O|| Stephen Parkes aka sparkes blog <http://sp.arkes.co.uk>
||O|| Geek Gear <http://nerd.ws>, Free Software <http://zx-81.com>
|O|O|O| Autistic GNU/Linux/*nix User Group <http://autisticlug.org>
motd: Anything on the ground is a cat toy. Anything not there yet, will be.

Art and autism: art exhibition, auction and concert

Sunday, 17 September 06

The First Autism Research Conference

Monday, 18 September 06

Both at West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

Full details are at
www.arc-conference.com

or contact Sally Cryer at
sally@arc-conference.com

and on 01234 328 330

World congress on autism: autism safari — exploring new territories

Monday, 30 October to
Thursday, 2 November 06

To be held at the International Convention
Centre, Cape Town, South Africa

Full details are at
www.autismcongress.com

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